

## HSA FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES

Feb 22, 2018 2:00 PM

Welcome by Presidents.

December 2017 Minutes approved

### Principal Ferrara Report:

a) TREPS Marketplace

The 5<sup>th</sup> Graders raised \$2845 by TREPS marketplace this year. The event was well attended by families and friends. The funds will be divided between the 5<sup>th</sup> grade party and charities chosen by the 5<sup>th</sup> grade class.

The TREPS program will be moving to the Middle School next year, and Principal Ferrara and the staff are currently considering alternative programing, such as an invention convention or other STEM type programing with experiential learning to take its place. The goal of any new alternative program will be to have student activity and learning during the school day, rather than preparation at home, to ensure there is a worthwhile and meaningful program for the students.

Parent question: Can we consider Odyssey of the Mind as a program?

b) 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Science Fair

The 4<sup>th</sup> Grade will no longer be holding a science fair. The fair is currently not held in all four elementary schools. With the significant change in science and STEM curriculum in our schools this year, the students are now having additional scientific thinking, problem solving and hands on learning through experimentation. Any alternative, new program to replace the science fair will supplement this new science curriculum. The replacement program will then be instituted in all four elementary schools consistently.

Parent comment: want to ensure that there is still a special program for the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade since all other grades have a focused activity.

Principal Ferrara agrees, but cannot guarantee any replacement program will be available for this years' students.

Parent question: What happened to the biology notebooks for the 4<sup>th</sup> Graders?

Principal Ferrara explained that there is new, daily programing in classrooms and the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade curriculum no longer has the human body systems. With Science – its written by grade 4, by grade 8, by grade 12. So not yearly program goals. Working with science supervisor to determine which units will go with which grade. Science is the only subject that currently had a major overhaul of curriculum in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade. Will review K-3 Grade units for science as well. Next generation science standards made a huge difference. Statewide and nationally. Next cycle for curriculum review will be Social Studies.

c) 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Transition Activities

There will be a 5<sup>th</sup> Grade transition lecture by Mr. Fabo for parents on February 28<sup>th</sup> in the Tenafly Middle School. The 5<sup>th</sup> Grade classes have already been visited by current middle school students, where questions and answers concerning middle school topics were discussed, such as lockers, lunch and changing for gym.

d) Barbara Laudicina- new Acting Superintendent for Tenafly Public Schools

Following the departure of the former Superintendent, Barbara Laudicina will be stepping in as Acting Superintendent. Mrs. Laudicina has been part of the school district for the past 13 years as the past Principal of Stillman Elementary and the Assistant Superintendent since July 2010.

e) Board of Education Budget Meetings & Retreat

The Tenafly Board of Education is currently working on finalizing the school budget. There will be two upcoming meetings on February 26<sup>th</sup> and Monday March 5<sup>th</sup> at the Tenafly High School for families to speak and make suggestions to the Board during their budget retreat. This date is a continuation of the previous budget meetings.

Parent question: Are we in a deficit and if so, how will that effect Maugham Elementary?

Response by Eileen Pleva: I am here as a parent and not on behalf of the Board. The School Board does not have a deficit -- we could raise the tax levy from 2% to 5% to cover the expenses, but that is not really fiscally responsible at this time. It is up to the administration to come back with some proposed cuts to try to stay within the 2%. State regulates a 2% tax levy for the State of NJ. It is not a realistic number to keep up with increasing salaries, wages and health insurance costs. To exist within the 2%, we need to sensibly cut back on programing.

There is an opportunity for parents to ask questions and make public comments during the budget retreat on Monday February 26<sup>th</sup> and again on March 5<sup>th</sup> at the High School Media Center at 7 PM.

f) School Safety and Gun Control Discussion

Principal Ferrara expressed disbelief and shock at the news from Parkland, Florida. She stated that in our school district, we do everything we possibly can to protect the students.

School Drills

NJ mandates school safety drills, which are conducted each month. At Maugham, there is a fire drill, evacuation drill, CPR emergency drill, lockdown drill and a shelter in place drill. The students have participated in these drills, which have now hopefully become regular and routine instructions to follow. Maugham intentionally conducts drills during the lunchtime sessions so the students are prepared when not in their classrooms. There is always a specific procedure to follow and a school safety plan. These are coordinated drills with the Police Department, which gives feedback for improvements. There are drills where the doors are locked and the school is on lock down for four minutes.

March 14<sup>th</sup> Walkout Day

National school walkout for 17 minutes to honor the Parkland, Florida victims of gun violence. Maugham students may not know what happened, so Principal Ferrara and staff are working on finding a meaningful and thoughtful way to acknowledge this as a

community. I.e. focus on kindness to others. All four elementary schools will decide and do something consistently across the town.

Parent question: Will this information be conveyed to parents and families? How is the school addressing violence prevention, school bullying to avoid this ever happening again?

Principal Ferrara: Yes, the March 14<sup>th</sup> decision will be discussed with parents. The Tenafly School Principals are meeting with Police Chief Chamberlain and Superintendent Luadicina to discuss school safety and these issues. We are coming up with plans on how to address this.

Parent question: How do we discuss these issues with our children? What is age appropriate? How do we explain the drills? My children believe they are if there is a squirrel loose in the hallway or a tiger loose in the school. Could families possibly speak with the school counselor?

Principal Ferrara: Yes, the counselors are available, and the high school and middle school counselors have offered their services to the elementary schools. There are also a lot of good resources and articles on how to talk to your children about violence. I will find some quality discussions with advice on how to speak with your school.

We do not tell the students we are doing drills for active shooters, but the lockdown drills are as if there is a stranger/ shooter in the school.

As Principal, I can make an emergency call from anywhere in the school. There are three types of calls to be made: lockdown, emergency, and shelter in place. This tells the authorities and staff how to proceed.

Parent question: School safety patrol. My child has been a safety monitor on the back and side doors of schools. If an adult came to enter the building, my child would not know to say no to let them into the school. I am concerned about my child doing this job.

Principal Ferrara: There are 10 doors to our school. We are looking for options as to where parents can come into the building at school drop off and pick up. Parents are currently going to all 10 doors around the building at these times, but during the day, only the main door can be opened.

Parent question: How prepared is the front office and Mrs. Walsh to not open doors to strangers?

Principal Ferrara: No one should be able to come into the building without first being seen by the front office. If there is an unknown person at the door, they can communicate by phone. Person stands outside locked door until identified. Parents are called if there is an unknown person there to pick up their child. Parents are there to monitor the lunch delivery people, which are vetted beforehand. We will have the discussion concerning all of this, as well as for the after school club time periods since there are only two club supervisors.

Parent comment: need to make sure parents do not let in others behind them at the doors.

Parent question: Have security guards in school during these times been discussed?

Principal Ferrara: Yes, back when Sandy Hook occurred, the Tenafly schools met with the Police and experts. No decision was made to put guards into schools. I will discuss this again with Police Chief Chamberlain.

### HSA Committee Updates

1) International Day

The HSA is hosting International day on Friday, March 9<sup>th</sup> with a celebration of India, the host country. The India celebration will include a catered buffet of Indian food, as well as displays of art, dance, culture and history. There will also be a Festival of Tables on Monday, March 12<sup>th</sup> featuring countries around the world. There will be no food served on March 12<sup>th</sup>. The International Day Committee is still looking for volunteers, so please go to <http://www.maughamschoolhsa.com> for the Sign Up Genius to participate.

2) School Supplies

The HSA has a new company for school supplies, Write Stuff, which works with teachers and parent volunteers to create school supply lists on line for easy ordering. Maugham is looking for two volunteers to chair the school supplies committee and work with our teachers.

3) After School Clubs

After school clubs have been successful this far in programing and fundraising for Maugham. This year club sessions brought in approximately \$20,000 in profit for our school thanks to the 266 enrolled students in the 26 clubs. The club chairs have done a fantastic job of tracking trends in the type of clubs students at each level are participating in so far, and are welcoming any new club ideas if you have any for future sessions. After school clubs end March 26<sup>th</sup>, so be on the lookout for new club schedules and sign up information. Please contact Serena Chai, Susan Scherman and Joanne Surick at [maughamclubs@gmail.com](mailto:maughamclubs@gmail.com) for comments and suggestions.

4) Fifth Grade Committee

The 5<sup>th</sup> Graders are invited to the Ice Skating Party next Friday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> at Mackay Ice Rink in Englewood, NJ. The committee is currently planning the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade pool party for the Spring on June 8<sup>th</sup>, with a possible rain date for June 15<sup>th</sup>.